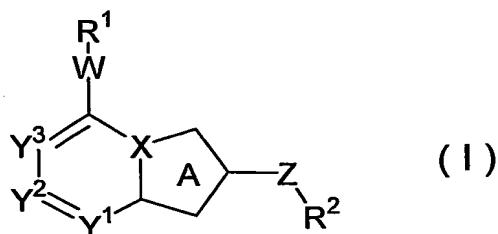


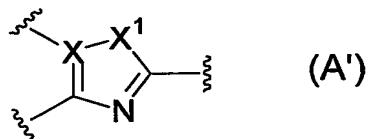
CLAIMS

1. A compound represented by the formula (I):

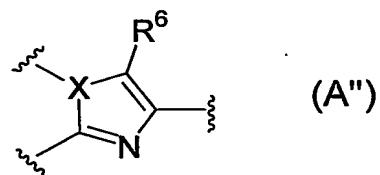


wherein, ring A is a 5-membered ring represented by the

5 formula (A'):



wherein X is a carbon and X¹ is an oxygen, a sulfur or -NR⁵- (wherein R⁵ is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl), or formula (A''):



10 wherein X is a nitrogen and R⁶ is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl;

R¹ is (1) an amino substituted by two substituents selected from an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl group and an optionally substituted heterocyclic group, or (2) an optionally substituted cyclic amino, provided that the amino nitrogen of said cyclic amino has no carbonyl adjacent to the nitrogen;

15

R² is an optionally substituted alkyl, an optionally substituted cycloalkyl, an optionally substituted cycloalkenyl, an optionally substituted aryl or an optionally substituted heterocyclic;

5 Y¹, Y² and Y³ are each an optionally substituted methyne or a nitrogen, provided that one or less of Y¹, Y² and Y³ is nitrogen;

W is a bond, -(CH₂)_n- or -(CH₂)_m-CO- (wherein n is an integer of 1 to 4 and m is an integer of 0 to 4);

10 Z is a bond, -CO-, an oxygen, a sulfur, -SO-, -SO₂-, -NR⁴-, -NR⁴-alk-, -CONR⁴- or -NR⁴CO- (wherein alk is an optionally substituted C₁₋₄ alkylene and R⁴ is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl);

15 provided that (i) the compound wherein ring A is the 5-membered ring of the formula A' (wherein X is a carbon and X¹ is a sulfur), W is a bond, Z is -NHCO- or -CONH-, and Y¹ is CR^{3a} (wherein R^{3a} is a hydrogen, a halogen, or an alkoxy) and

20 (ii) the compound wherein ring A is the 5-membered ring of the formula A' (wherein X is a carbon and X¹ is an oxygen, a sulfur, or -NH-), R¹ is an optionally substituted 1-piperazinyl, W is a bond, Z is a bond and R² is an optionally substituted aryl, are excluded; or a salt thereof.

25 2. A prodrug of the compound according to claim 1.

3. The compound according to claim 1 wherein R¹ is an amino substituted by two optionally substituted C₁₋₄ alkyl groups.

4. The compound according to claim 1 wherein R¹ is an amino substituted by an optionally substituted C₁₋₄ alkyl and an optionally substituted phenyl or optionally substituted heterocyclic.

5. The compound according to claim 1 wherein R¹ is a 5- or 6-membered cyclic amino which may be substituted with one or more substituents.

10 6. The compound according to claim 1 wherein Y¹ is CR^{3a}, Y² is CR^{3b}, and Y³ is CR^{3c} (wherein R^{3a}, R^{3b} and R^{3c} are independently a hydrogen, a halogen, a nitro, an optionally substituted C₁₋₄ hydrocarbyl, an optionally substituted C₁₋₄ hydrocarbyloxy, an optionally substituted C₁₋₄ hydrocarbylthio, an optionally substituted amino or an acyl containing up to 4 carbon atoms).

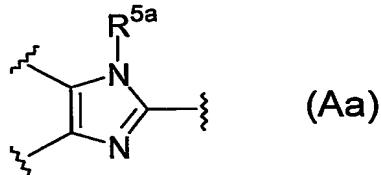
15 7. The compound according to claim 1 wherein one of Y¹, Y² and Y³ is nitrogen.

20 8. The compound according to claim 1 wherein W is a bond.

9. The compound according to claim 1 wherein R² is an optionally substituted C₆₋₁₀ aryl or an optionally substituted 5- or 10-membered heterocyclic.

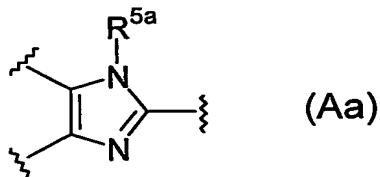
25 10. The compound according to claim 1 wherein Z is -NR⁴⁻ (wherein R⁴ is as defined in claim 1).

11. The compound according to claim 1 wherein ring A is a thiazole ring or an imidazole ring represented by the formula (Aa) :



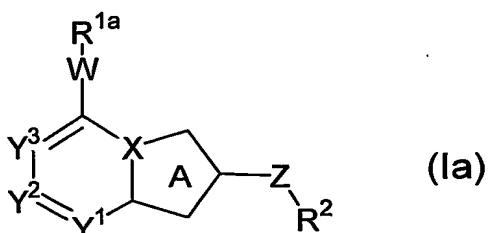
5 wherein R^{5a} is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} alkyl or an acyl containing up to 4 carbon atoms.

12. The compound according to claim 1 wherein Y^1 is CR^{3a} , Y^2 is CR^{3b} and Y^3 is CR^{3c} (wherein R^{3a} , R^{3b} and R^{3c} are independently a hydrogen, a halogen, a nitro, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} hydrocarbyl, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} hydrocarbyloxy, an optionally substituted amino or an acyl containing up to 4 carbon atoms); W is a bond; R^2 is an optionally substituted C_{6-10} aryl or an optionally substituted 5- or 10-membered heterocyclic; and Z is $-NR^4-$ (wherein R^4 is a hydrogen or an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl); and ring A is a thiazole ring or an imidazole ring represented by the formula (Aa) :

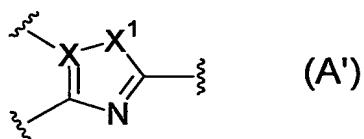


20 wherein R^{5a} is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} alkyl, or an acyl containing up to 4 carbon atoms.

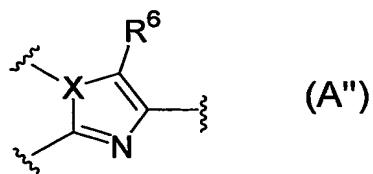
13. A method for treating or preventing a disease wherein a CRF receptor is implicated, which comprises administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound represented by the formula (Ia):



wherein ring A is a 5-membered ring represented by the formula (A'):



10 wherein X is a carbon and X¹ is an oxygen, a sulfur or -NR⁵- (wherein R⁵ is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl), or formula (A''):



wherein X is a nitrogen and R⁶ is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl;

15 R^{1a} is (1) an amino substituted by two substituents selected from an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl group and an optionally substituted heterocyclic group, or (2) an optionally substituted cyclic amino;

R^2 is an optionally substituted alkyl, an optionally substituted cycloalkyl, an optionally substituted cycloalkenyl, an optionally substituted aryl or an optionally substituted heterocyclic;

5 Y^1 , Y^2 and Y^3 are each an optionally substituted methyne or a nitrogen, provided that one or less of Y^1 , Y^2 and Y^3 is nitrogen;

W is a bond, $-(CH_2)_n-$ or $-(CH_2)_m-CO-$, wherein n is an integer of 1 to 4 and m is an integer of 0 to 4;

10 Z is a bond, $-CO-$, an oxygen, a sulfur, $-SO-$, $-SO_2-$, $-NR^4-$, $-NR^4-alk-$, $-CONR^4-$ or $-NR^4CO-$ (wherein alk is an optionally substituted C_{1-4} alkylene and R^4 is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl);

15 provided that the compound wherein ring A is the 5-membered ring of the formula A' (wherein X is a carbon and X^1 is a sulfur), W is a bond, Z is $-NHCO-$ or $-CONH-$, and Y^1 is CR^{3a} (wherein R^{3a} is a halogen, or an alkoxy) is excluded; or a salt thereof.

14. The method according to claim 13 wherein the disease being treated or prevented is selected from affective disorder, depression and anxiety.

20 15. Use of the compound (Ia) according to claim 13, or a salt thereof for manufacturing a medicament for preventing or treating a disease wherein a CRF receptor is implicated.

25 16. Use of the compound (Ia) according to claim 13, or a

salt thereof for manufacturing a medicament for preventing or treating affective disorder, depression or anxiety.

17. An agent for preventing or treating a disease wherein a CRF receptor is implicated, which comprises the compound 5 (Ia) according to claim 13 or a salt thereof.

18. An agent for preventing or treating affective disorder, depression or anxiety which comprises the compound (Ia) according to claim 13 or a salt thereof.